

REMARKS

I. INITIAL REMARKS

In response to the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 3-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Baxley *et al.*, U.S. Publication No. 2004/0085913 (hereinafter "Baxley"), in view of Kung *et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 6,671,262 (hereinafter "Kung") Applicants have amended claims 1, 3-5 and present the following arguments. No new matter has been added.

In light of the currently made amendments and comments that follow, the rejections in the March 17, 2006 Office Action have been overcome and should be withdrawn.

II. THE EXAMINER'S REJECTIONS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being unpatentable over Baxley in view of Kung. The Examiner cites Baxley as teaching elements (3) – (7) and the eighth clause of claims 1, 3, and 5 and as teaching third through seventh clauses of claim 4. However, the Examiner concedes that while Baxley teaches a single server serving as both a packet-switch and a circuit-switch conferencing server but fails to teach:

[A] separate packet-switch conferencing server and a circuit-switched conferencing server, thereby establishing by a packet-switched conferencing server, a connection to a circuit-switched conferencing server; designating said connection as an active speaker on said packet-switched conferencing server; and forwarding, over said connection, said second audio packet to said circuit-switched conferencing server. Office Action dated March 17, 2006, pages 3-4, page 5, and page 7.

Subsequently, the Examiner proposes that Kung teaches audio conferencing between IP and PSTN networks. The Examiner then suggested that it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine Baxley and Kung because:

[Both] teachings are similar in that they deal with audio conferencing between users of a circuit switch network and a packet switch network. Furthermore, the teaching of Kung to provide a plurality of conference servers and transmits audio packets from one conference server to another conference server would improve the teachings of Baxley by allowing a greater number of users to participate in audio conferencing by distributing the server load to the plurality of server. Using a single conference server may limit the number of participating users as the single server may become more easily overloaded. Office Action dated March 17, 2006, page 4, page 6, and page 8.

III. THE EXAMINER'S REJECTIONS SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being unpatentable over Baxley in view of Kung. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that none of the claims are rendered obvious in view of the cited references.

According to currently amended independent claims 1, 3-5 the present invention provides methods and systems for linking a first plurality of clients connected to a packet-switched conferencing server to a second plurality of clients connected to a circuit-switched conferencing server comprising essentially the elements: (a) establishing a connection between the packet-switched conferencing server and the circuit-switched conferencing server; (b) designating the connection as an active speaker; (c) receiving, by the circuit-switched conferencing server, a plurality of audio packets, wherein the plurality of audio packets comprises a first audio packet from each of the second plurality of clients who have been designated as an active speaker by the circuit-switched conferencing server; (d) receiving, by the packet-switched conferencing server, a

plurality of audio packets, wherein the plurality of audio packets comprises a second audio packet from each of the first plurality of clients who have been designated as an active speaker by the packet-switched conferencing server; (e) forwarding, over the connection, the first audio packet to the packet-switched conferencing server; (f) forwarding, over the connection, the second audio packet to the circuit-switched conferencing server; (g) whereby the first and second plurality of clients, using varying equipment and protocols, can simultaneously participate in a single audio conference application; and (h) whereby the packet-switched conferencing server is independent from the circuit-switched conferencing server.

In contrast, Baxley discloses an audio conference method in a hybrid network wherein input from packet-switched clients 120 and circuits-switched clients 30 connected to an audio conference is received by MCU pool 165 which act as both a packet-switched conferencing server and a circuit-switch conferencing server. *See* Baxley Fig. 1 and Office Action dated March 17, 2006, page 3. Baxley fails to teach that the packet-switch conferencing server is independent from the circuit-switched conferencing server.

The Examiner argued that Kung teaches “audio conferencing between users of IP based networks and PSTN based networks (Col 3, lines 26-33), where a plurality of conferencing servers are implemented for communication between users (Col 31, lines 29-30). A first conference server connects and transmits the voice packets of the users of the first conference server to the second conference server (Col 31, lines 42-50).” *See* Office Action dated March 17, 2006, page 4. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that Kung does not teach a method of linking a first plurality of clients connected to a

packet-switched conferencing server to a second plurality of clients connected to a circuit-switched conferencing server. Kung teaches a broadband network **1** in which customer premises equipment units **102** (e.g., televisions, personal computers, phones, video phone, IP enabled phones, etc.) are interconnected to an IP network **120** through a broadband residential gateway **300**, a hybrid fiber-coaxial plant **112** (e.g., coaxial cable and/or optical fiber) and further through a head-end hub **115**. (Emphasis added). *See* Kung, Col. 3, ll. 38-66, Col. 4, ll. 21-53, Fig. 1, Fig. 3, and Fig. 4. Each customer premises equipment **102** is assigned an IP address by an IP central station **200**. *See* Kung, Col. 7, ll. 27-63. Further, gateways in the IP central station **200** “provide translation of signals to and/or from the various servers in the IP central station **200**, the IP network **120**, the public switched telephone network **160**... The voice gateway (VG) **232** may be connected to the public switched telephone network **160** and operate to convert between IP based voice packets and standard public switched telephone network **160** voice traffic.” *See* Kung, Col. 12, ll. 1-15. A conference server (CS) **224**, incorporated in the IP central station **200**, handles “multiparty conference calls using, for example, IP voice packets during an IP telephony or multimedia session call.” *See* Kung, Col. 11, ll. 41-44. Thereby, the customer premises equipment **102** voice input, what ever form it may be, is converted to an IP voice packet by the IP central station **200** before it reaches the conference server (CS) **224**. Since Kung’s conference server (CS) **224** treats the customer premises equipment **102** as a packet-switched client (IP client), the server **224** is merely a packet-switched server that only handles packet-switched clients. In addition, Kung’s system requires the use of an IP central station **200** to handle calls.

Although, Kung teaches the use of plurality of conferencing servers interworked on a single conference call, he teaches the above for the purpose of accommodating additional calls. *See* Kung, Col. 31, ll. 22-28. Specifically, Kung's system includes multiple conference servers for "combining IP packet streams in a conference call into a combined IP packet stream, such that the combined IP packet stream utilizes no more bandwidth than each of the original IP packet stream. This allows the traffic volume coming from, and arriving at, each party to a conference call to remain essentially the same no matter how many parties are connected to the conference call. A plurality of the conference servers may be configured to interwork with each other so as to allow for a much larger conference call." *See* Kung, Abstract. Kung only teaches a plurality of packed-switched conferencing servers interworked on a single conference call to connect plurality of packed-switched clients. Thus, Kung fails to teach a method of linking a first plurality of clients connected to a packet-switched conferencing server to a second plurality of clients connected to a circuit-switched conferencing server whereby the first and second plurality of clients can simultaneously participate in a single audio conference application and whereby the packet-switched conferencing server is independent from the circuit-switched conferencing server.

Upon reconsideration, the Examiner will undoubtedly recognize that Baxley and Kung individually and in combination fail to disclose the present invention as provided in amended independent claims 1, 3-5. In addition, none of these references, alone or in combination, disclose methods and systems for linking a first plurality of clients connected to a packet-switched conferencing server to a second plurality of clients connected to a circuit-switched conferencing server whereby the first and second

plurality of clients can simultaneously participate in a single audio conference application and whereby the packet-switched conferencing server is independent from the circuit-switched conferencing server as required by amended independent claims 1, 3-5. Since it is black letter law that references, either alone or in combination, used in a 35 USC §103(a) rejection must teach or suggest each and every claim limitation (MPEP § 2143-2143.03), Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is improper and should be withdrawn. As such, independent claims 1, 3-5 are in condition for allowance.

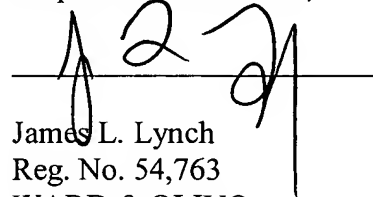
10 IV. CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that pending independent claims 1, 3-5 represent a patentable contribution to the art and is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is accordingly solicited.

15

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Respectfully submitted,



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